



The Nutshell

FEBRUARY 2003
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Newsletter of Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center

The Nature Center Gets a Face Lift!

It's been a long-time coming, but the drop cloths have been rolled up, the ladders put away, the paint brushes washed off, and the workmen have gone home. The work has been completed on the new Wildlife Viewing Room at Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center and it's time to celebrate!

We're rolling out the red carpet and inviting you to an Open House on **February 15th**. We will have refreshments throughout the day in the Viewing Room and have a naturalist available to talk with you about the wildlife you may be seeing through these incredible windows! Grab your sweetheart for a date you won't soon forget!

The Viewing Room has comfortable tables and chairs for you to come and relax with your field guide and binoculars to see what critters might be visiting the area. Stay for an hour or the afternoon!



Throughout the year, we'll have special programs and guest speakers in the Viewing room and the space will convert into an extended indoor/outdoor classroom.

This spring and fall, we're planning some special planting projects that will enhance the backyard area and attract more wildlife, as well as give you ideas for what can be done in your own backyard.

Visitors have been impressed by the energy efficient and conservation-minded poured concrete floor that looks like slate, the special ceiling tiles with leaf prints, the double paned vapor glass, and all of the special details. We think you'll be impressed, too. Cozy up with your sweetheart and find out for yourself how really cool this new Viewing Room really is!

Youth Turkey Hunt Slated for April

Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center will host Missouri's first Youth-Only Managed Turkey Hunt this April 12th and 13th. Ten youth, ages 11-15 inclusive, will be selected to participate in this spring hunt. If you have a child within this age range who has never hunted before, and you live in Jackson County, he or she may be a candidate for this hunt.

We want to thank the National Wild Turkey Federation, Safari Club International, Sables Division of Safari Club International and taxidermist Monte Sink for their very generous donations and support in helping make this a reality.

Please stop by the nature center for a hunt application.

Fish, Film, & Feedings

The fish, turtles, and amphibians are fed Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday at 3 p.m. The snakes are fed every other Friday at 3:30 p.m.

Films are shown Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 p.m.

February 1st & 16th
Fantastic Follies

February 2nd & 22nd
Back to the Wild

February 8th & 23rd
Animals that Live in the City

February 9th & 15th
Birds of the backyard

Our mission is to bring people and nature together.



From the Treetops

Many times people ask how they can help at the nature center; how they can contribute; how they can fit in. Sometimes our volunteer naturalist program doesn't fit everyone's schedule. Our project work days may require too much physical activity, and picking up trash doesn't seem very glamorous.

Well, do I have a deal for you! With our new Viewing Room opening, we are very much in need of new bird feeders! We need any shape, size, and color feeders! We have so much space for feeders of every, and any, shape imaginable, you wouldn't believe it!

Why not donate one in your friend's name, have your kids pick one out, buy a family feeder and bring it out together, make one and paint it together, donate one as an anniversary gift. The ideas are endless.

You may not have time to go out and purchase a feeder, so you could always make a donation to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation in the name of Burr Oak Woods, and then we could do the feeder shopping for you! The fun really begins as we all watch the birds flocking to the feeder banquet!

In the following months, you can watch for the thank you list in the *Nutshell* of all the people that have accepted this challenge and donated feeders!

Thanks folks! Your generosity is what keeps us growing!
Happy trails!

— LYNN YOUNGBLOOD
Nature Center Manager

Critter Corner ↘ ↘ ↘

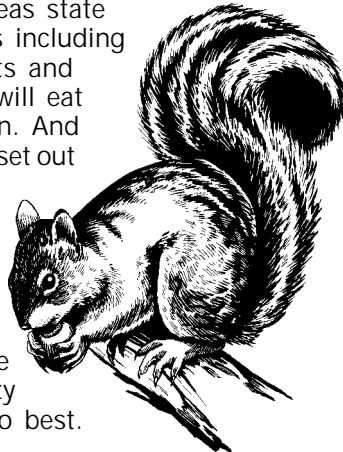
Eastern Gray Squirrel

by Stephanie Acers, *Naturalist*

Squirrels, squirrels, everywhere squirrels! This time of year it seems like you see squirrels everywhere. Running through the yard, hanging on bird feeders, and chasing each other around trees, what exactly are they doing? Whether you live in the city or the country you can see squirrels doing these crazy stunts.

In Missouri we have two species of tree squirrels, one of which is the Eastern gray squirrel. The Eastern gray squirrel is a medium sized slender squirrel with a gray back and a white belly and edge of tail. Gray squirrels prefer oak/hickory forests along river bottoms and bluffs, but occur in forested areas state wide. They eat a variety of nuts including hickory, acorns, pecans, walnuts and depending on the season they will eat berries, fruit, and domestic corn. And yes, they love that free buffet you set out for the birds too.

These squirrels do not hibernate, which means you can see them all year long. So come on out to Burr Oak Woods, hike a trail or watch the feeders, and I can guarantee you will see some of these crazy little critters doing what they do best.



Citizen Science:

Making a Difference, And Learning, Too!

Typically we think of only highly trained biologists, ecologists and scientists as the people that conduct research, gather data and expand our knowledge of science and nature. However, average citizens have always made contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the natural world, whether it is discovering distant comets or finding a rare animal or plant where it was previously not known to exist.

Today, more and more people from every walk of life are becoming involved in scientific endeavors, ranging from stream monitoring to Christmas bird counts, butterfly counts and more. At Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center, we are looking forward to initiating new programs that will involve our own corps of "citizen scientists." This spring we hope to initiate comprehensive surveys of the centers' vascular plants, birds and butterflies. While staff and volunteers will be involved with these efforts, we hope to find members of our community that value BOW and want to become more involved, hopefully through one or more of these efforts.

Not only will participants add greatly to our knowledge and understanding of the more than 1,000 acres that comprise Burr Oak Woods, our citizen scientists will also learn a great deal about the natural world for themselves. Initial plans call for our efforts to be kicked off in early March. If you are interested in becoming a BOW citizen scientist, please watch for the March edition of *The Nutshell* for more details. We hope you'll consider joining us.

- N A T U R A L H A P P E N I N G S -

- With the freezing nights and thawing days of February, maple sap will flow at its best. This is a great time to try maple tree tapping. Watch for a class coming soon.

- During evening strolls around the nature center be sure to watch for screech owls gathering nesting materials. If you listen carefully you may be able to hear their mysterious "screaming" calls.

- Western chorus frogs will begin to call in late February. Their calls sound like a thumbnail running along a comb.

- Songbirds such as chickadees and cardinals will start their mating and territorial singing. Come out to one of our bird walks and listen for them.

FEBRUARY EVENTS *at Burr Oak Woods*

Call Burr Oak Woods Nature Center on or after February 1 to register for free programs. (Phone 228-3766 V/TDD). If you have to cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend.

2 *Sunday* **Dr. Nutcase is in the House!**

Our country generates 190 million tons of trash every year! So, why aren't we being smothered by garbage? Learn the answer when you come out to meet nature's recyclers! Bring 1) three 2-liter bottles with lids 2) kitchen scraps, newspaper, leaves, grass or other fresh organic materials. Just who is nature's trash man? Registration required.

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Ages: 7 & up

4 *Tuesday* **Birding 101** **Loons to Pelicans**

Birding 101 is an opportunity to learn more about the birds of Missouri. While this on-going program is designed for beginning bird watchers, birders of any experience level are welcome. During February we will be focused on water birds including loons, grebes, pelicans, cormorants and waterfowl. As with every session of Birding 101, please call to register.

Time: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Ages: Adults (20 & up)

7 *Fridays* **21 Winter Bird Walks**

It's time to put on your mittens and scarves and join Naturalist Stephanie Acers for a crisp bird walk around Burr Oak Woods. All experiences welcome. Binoculars will be available if needed. No registration is required.

Time: 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.
Ages: Adults (20 & up)

8 *Saturday* **Outdoor Adventurers:** **Winter Outdoor Skills** **Survival Camp**

Winter is not the time to hibernate in front of the T.V! Throw on some warm clothes and lace up your boots. Head outside with naturalists Anna-Lisa Tucker and Lisa LaCombe Try your hand at archery and learn some new map and compass skills on the remote north side of Burr Oak Woods. Join in on the adventure...if you dare. Bring a sack lunch and dress for the weather.

Registration required.

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Ages: 11 - 13

9 *Sunday* **Into the Woods Book Club** **and Writer's Group**

Join naturalist Lisa LaCombe as we explore the world of Aldo Leopold through the Sand County Almanac. Bring your own poetry or nature prose to share. We will explore the natural world through literature. Please call for more information and to pick up a copy of the book. Please call to register.

Time: 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Ages: Adults (20 & up)

9 *Sunday* **Nature's Sketch Book**

Being out in the field and sketching our natural world is the perfect way to study nature. Join Lisa LaCombe as we examine lighting, shadows and form. Don't forget your sketchbook and creative spirit! Registration required.

Time: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Ages: Adults (20 & up)

13 *Thursday* **Homeschool: Groundhogs**

What do Woodchucks, Groundhogs, and Marmot have in common? We will become groundhogs, digging our way out of our burrows and look for our shadow. Come join the fun! Groundhog crafts included! Please call to register.

Time: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. or
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Ages: 3 - 6

13 *Thursday* **Homeschool:** **You be the Judge**

Students will become active participants in a public hearing involving a controversial issue that could directly impact their life. Teamwork, debate, and problem solving will be stressed. What decision will your group make? Registration required.

Time: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. or
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Ages: 7 & up

14 *Fridays* **28 Winter Bird Walks**

It's time to put on your mittens and scarves and join Naturalist Stephanie Acers for a crisp bird walk around Burr Oak Woods. No experience necessary. Binoculars will be available if needed. No registration is required.

Time: 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.
Ages: All Ages Welcome

15 *Saturday* **Who Goes There?**

Winter is the perfect time of year to check out the comings and goings of wildlife. After a brief introduction, we'll head outdoors in search of signs of animal activity, from tracks to scat. Who knows, maybe we'll even see the animals themselves! Join us for this fun outdoor natural history program. Please register and be sure to dress everyone for the outdoors.

Time: 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Ages: Families (5 & up)

**BE SURE TO CHECK
THE NEXT PAGE FOR
MORE PROGRAMS!**

more! FEBRUARY EVENTS

16 Sunday

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Families: Jelly making

Have you always wanted to learn how to make jam? Ever wonder what wild edibles would be good to use? Join Naturalist Sheri Medlock for this hands-on introductory program as we show you how to make the perfect jam! We will be making sumac jelly. Bring a baby food jar so you could take some home! Please call to register.

Time: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Ages: Families (Ages 6 & up).

18 Tuesday

Birding 101 - Waterfowl

This evening session will focus on the identification, natural history and conservation of waterfowl. From swans and geese to the many species of ducks and mergansers, you'll discover their diversity and the challenges they face for survival. As with every session of Birding 101, please call to register.

Time: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Ages: Adults (20 & up)

22 Saturday

Bird House Building

A great way to attract birds to your backyard is by providing a nesting site. And this is the perfect time of year to put them out. Join Naturalist Diane Neal in building a bird house for your very own back yard. Limit one house per family. Please call to register.

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Ages: Families



22 Saturday

25 Tuesday

26 Wednesday

Little Acorns: Escape with the Groundhogs!

What do Woodchucks, Groundhogs, and Marmot have in common? We will become groundhogs, digging our way out of our burrows and look for our shadow. Come join the fun! Groundhog crafts included! Please call to register. Hey Moms! Be sure to check out the

Mother's Day Out program below!

Times: 10:30 - 11:5 a.m.

or 1:00 - 2:15 p.m.

Ages: 3 - 6

NEW!

Mother's Day Out

While your little ones are learning about the wonders of nature, it's your turn to get in touch with your wild side. Join Naturalist Stephanie Acers as we learn about nature journaling. We will then take a walk on one of the trails and try it ourselves. Bring your notebook and writing medium. Please call to register. **Tuesday and Wednesday Only.**

23 Sunday

Burr Oak Woods Hiking Club

Join volunteer naturalists Melissa Schudel and Marvin Roberts as they lead you cross country through the remote and wildly beautiful Burr Oak Woods North. Meet at the nature center. Dress for the weather. Registration required.

Time: 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Ages: Adults (20 & up)

24 Monday

Conservation Kid's Club: Winter Exploration: Snowshoes!

Last month, the Kid's Club learned about winter survival. With our new skills, let's prepare to explore the winter woods. We will make our own snowshoes out of native Missouri woods. Hmmm... It sure looks like it could snow... Registration required.

Time: 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Ages: 7 - 10

28 Friday

Prowlin' for Owls

Owls are among nature's best hunters. Bring your family out and join IPS Craig Hensley for a sure-to-be fun evening of owl legend and lore followed by a search for these denizens of the dark. We'll end the evening with a really cool activity involving dissection of a special owl by-product, too! Be sure to dress for the weather! Please call to register.

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Ages: Families (6 & up)

March

1 Saturday

Birding 101 - Field Trip

Join IPS Craig Hensley for our first birding field trip. We'll head to Lake Jacomo in search of waterfowl and other water birds. Be sure to bring something to drink, a sack lunch and dress for the weather. Be sure to bring your field guide and binoculars. This field trip is only for those who have been attending the other sessions of Birding 101. Please call to register in February.

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Ages: Adults (20 & up)

~ Naturalist Notebook ~

Eyes of Wonder

by Lisa LaCombe

Checking my gear one last time, I push the old aluminum canoe and climb in, feeling the familiar scrape of gravel against the keel until the current gently urges me forward, downstream, around the next bend. The music of the stream and dip of my paddle is all that whispers in this perfect silence, this perfect solitude. The stream banks are cradled in freshly fallen snow. Slanting rays of the sun paint the towering bluffs with the glowing warmth of orange and crimson. I am surrounded by winter's masterpiece. My presence is announced by the scolding belted kingfisher as it flies on, just ahead...

It takes my breath away every time I have the chance to become a small part of Missouri's natural splendor. Nature does not die during the winter months. Our forests, prairies, and streams are filled with life. A wilderness experience does not have to take many weeks of planning or travel to far away lands. Gifts of nature can be found in your own backyard. Remember when we were children? We played outdoors all the time. Let the grown-up restrictions fall away. All you have to do is to step outside with the eyes of a child, filled with wonder. Do you need a focus?

Nature journaling is one of the very best ways to experience the great outdoors. It forces you to slow down and observe the world very carefully. This is something that very few of us, including myself, do often enough: taking the time to stop and smell the roses, or in this case, the cedars, or the wild cherry or... Nature journaling encourages you to get outdoors more often. It is something that the entire family can do. You do

not have to be an accomplished artist or outdoor writer. Your journal can be anything you want it to be. It can be simplistic or elaborate. You can add sketches, writings, documentations, photos of special places, the list is endless. The only requirement is that you slow down, sit quietly, and absorb this fantastic world around you. Do you need a starting point?

Many of the February programs at Burr Oak Woods provide a perfect starting point for your journey. Try Nature Journalling, or Nature's Sketchbook. Foster your child's relationship with nature by participating in one of our many fun-filled children's programs.

The more I learn in my life, the more I have come to realize that I do not know. We must have an insatiable hunger to learn about our natural world. I will be a much better naturalist for it. And so will you. As this river ran yesterday, so it will run tomorrow. A flash of silver within the turquoise catches my eye. The minnows and darters race the canoe. I'll never catch them... but I try.

My feet are so cold... but my eyes are filled with wonder.



Belted Kingfisher

Burr Oak Woods' Staff Profile Judy Bollmann



What do you like about working here?

Meeting the public and working with the personnel who are all great people. They have made the transition so good for me.

How long have you been with the Missouri Department of Conservation?

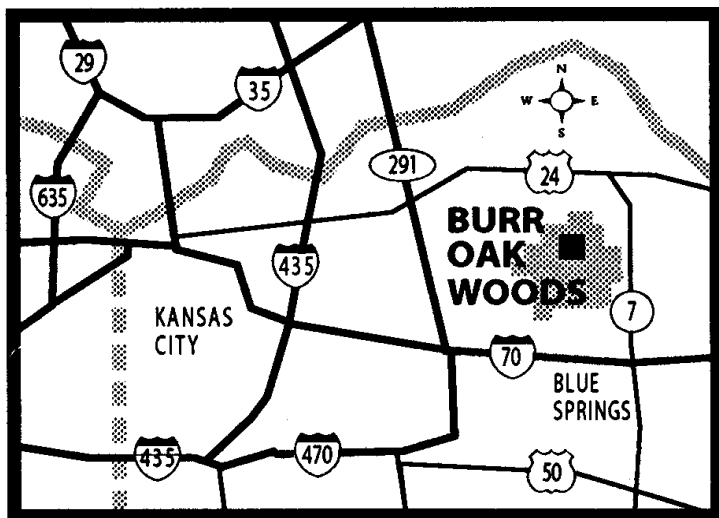
Since 1979.

Hobbies: Reading and crafts.

Family: 2 daughters, Julie and Jenny. "2 ³/₄" grandchildren: Lauren 5, Nicholas 3, one due in March.

Other points of interests:

Moved to Blue Springs from Jefferson City to be close to her grandchildren. Judy can be seen at the nature Center on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.



BURR OAK WOODS CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER is located one mile north of I-70 on Hwy 7, one mile west on Park Road. The Nature Center is open Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays. AREA HOURS: The area and trails are open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. No pets allowed. There is no admission fee. Gift Shop closes at 4:30 p.m.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BURR OAK WOODS BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.BurrOakWoods.org

GIFT SHOP NEWS!

Give the gift of nature on Valentine's Day. Our staff will be glad to help you with your selection.



Thank You!

A great big **THANK YOU** to the following Burr Oak Creek Families for your hard work at our February Stream Team Litter Pick-up! Kaye Hendrickson, Willa Hendrickson, Kim Touzinsky, Victoria Touzinsky, and Andre Redmond. The day was a great success! Watch *The Nutshell* Newsletter for future events.

- STAFF -

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LYNN YOUNGBLOOD

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R. CRAIG HENSLEY

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The Nutshell

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